



Jim Doyle
Governor

Helene Nelson
Secretary

State of Wisconsin

Department of Health and Family Services

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

P.O. BOX 2659

MADISON WI 53701-2659

Telephone: 608-266-1251

FAX: (608) 267-2832

www.dhfs.state.wi.us

September 15, 2003

Gary A. Evenson, Acting Administrator
Telecommunications Division
Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

RE: Endorsement of Petition by 2-1-1 Wisconsin, Inc. as the Proper Administrator and Authorized User in Wisconsin of the 211 Dialing Code in Order to Implement a Statewide, Non-Commercial Information and Referral System Providing Access to Human Services Providers and Information and Resources Relating to Public Health and Bio-Terrorism, and to be Granted Certain Other Relief Furthering Such Purpose

Dear Mr. Evenson:

The State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Public Health (the "Division of Public Health") fully endorses and supports 2-1-1 Wisconsin, Inc. ("2-1-1 Wisconsin") in its petition for recognition as the proper administrator and authorized user in Wisconsin of the 211 dialing code in order to implement a statewide, non-commercial information and referral system providing access to human services providers and information and resources relating to public health and bio-terrorism.


The Division of Public Health has determined that it is important for Wisconsin to have a statewide information and referral network to provide information relating to immediate social services needs, public health crises and bio-terrorism events, to coordinate volunteer efforts, and to increase responsiveness to Wisconsin residents. To meet that goal, the Division of Public Health sought out the services of The United Way of Dane County and 2-1-1 Wisconsin in its efforts to develop an organization capable of supporting the statewide development and implementation of 211 services to Wisconsin residents.

2-1-1 Wisconsin was established in response to the Division of Public Health's goal of providing more effective information and referral services to Wisconsin residents through various local social services agencies and providers. 2-1-1 Wisconsin is ideally situated to accomplish this goal. The organization includes representation from all of the interested parties. The various entities supported by 2-1-1 Wisconsin have considerable experience in providing I&R services to the public, and are familiar with the challenges of implementing 211 dialing services. As a result, 2-1-1 Wisconsin is well-prepared to implement and operate a statewide 211 system to provide information and referral services to those Wisconsin residents needing information relating to health and human services, bio-terrorism or other health emergencies, and to assist residents in accessing appropriate resources to meet immediate social services needs.

The Division of Public Health has obtained grant funds sufficient to initiate a statewide information and referral system to provide information relating to public health services and bio-terrorism. We have selected 2-1-1 Wisconsin to take the appropriate steps to organize and operate the State of Wisconsin system, and are confident that 2-1-1 Wisconsin, through the use of its integrated approach involving all of the concerned parties, will provide a fully functional, easily accessible 211 information and referral system to the residents of Wisconsin in the most efficient manner possible.

2-1-1 Wisconsin has the full support of the Division of Public Health in its petition to the Public Service Commission. By approving the petition, the Public Service Commission will ensure that the citizens of Wisconsin receive better quality information and referral services in a more timely fashion. Therefore, the Division of Public Health both endorses and approves the efforts of 2-1-1 Wisconsin in this regard.

Sincerely,


Kenneth Baldwin
Administrator

cc: Larry Olness